

July 6, 2018

APARTMENT COMPLEX IS FIRST IN PINELLAS TO EARN BREASTFEEDING AWARD

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The Waterchase Apartments in Largo is the first apartment complex in Pinellas County to earn the Bronze Level Breastfeeding Friendly Employer award.

The Florida Breastfeeding Coalition, a chapter of the United States Breastfeeding Committee, recognized the apartment complex for having a breastfeeding policy that provides employees a private lactation room, flexibility in their schedules to allow for pumping breaks, resources and help, if needed.



Pictured (left to right) Waterchase employees: Kathleen Smith, Kelsey Lawrence and Chelsi Wiley.

The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) assisted the complex by providing education and support through the Florida Healthy Babies (FHB) Initiative, a collaborative statewide project that focuses on health equity when it comes to breastfeeding, safe sleep and improved access to resources.

Kathleen Smith, Waterchase community manager and mother of two, wanted to create a friendly environment for other employees in a dedicated area at the complex.

“Being a new mom, and having to leave your newborn to come back to work is so very stressful. My hope is, by creating a private, comfortable environment for employees to pump breastmilk when they need to, it will be one less thing for them to worry about,” said Smith.

Chelsi Wiley, Waterchase employee and new mom to a son born on July 2, was the key motivation behind the apartment complex’s new policy. Wiley is happy to work for a company that supports breastfeeding moms and hopes the days of hiding in a public restroom or breakroom to breastfeed or pump are over.

“I hope that this will push more employers to think about their soon-to-be mothers and implement a better and more comfortable policy for breastfeeding moms,” says Wiley.

Thanks to a collaboration with DOH-Pinellas, the Tampa Bay Breastfeeding Task Force-Pinellas Chapter and the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County, the FHB Initiative in Pinellas has helped nine employers receive designation as a “Breastfeeding Friendly Employer” including seven new child care centers in Pinellas.

For more information about the Florida Healthy Babies Initiative in Pinellas, go to <http://pinellas.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/wellness-programs/healthy-babies/index.html> or call Samantha Staley at 727-824-6900, ext. 4632.

For more information about DOH-Pinellas, go to www.PinellasHealth.com or follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyPinellas](https://twitter.com/HealthyPinellas).

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